

In the claims:

Please amend the claims as shown below:

5

1. (Currently amended) A method for a pre-treatment of chips, comprising:

exposing the chips to an acidic treatment device by adding an acidic treatment fluid to establish an acidic slurry having a 10 fluid fraction exceeding 50%;

draining the chips from the acidic slurry so that the drained chips obtain a remaining free acidic fluid fraction surrounding the chips that does not exceed 10% by volume excluding any chip moisture disposed inside the chips;

15 heating the drained acidic slurry to a temperature exceeding 20° C;

recycling the drained acidic slurry to the acidic treatment device;

adding additional acidic treatment fluid to the acidic

20 treatment device only in a replacement amount that corresponds to an amount of acidic fluid that is retained in the drained chips;

heating the drained chips by steam to a first temperature; and heating the drained chips to a second temperature not

25 exceeding 140° C while adding an alkali impregnation liquid, the second temperature being higher than the first temperature.

2. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1

30 wherein the heating of the chips essentially takes place by an addition of warm alkali impregnation fluid.

3. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2 wherein the addition of the warm alkali impregnation fluid takes place in a vessel in which a flow of alkali impregnation fluid is formed in the vessel that flows in an opposite

5 direction to a flow of the chips.

4. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the heating of the chips takes place through an addition of ~~stem~~ steam to the chips in at least one step, after which the

10 chips that have been heated with steam are formed into a slurry with the alkali impregnation fluid.

5. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1

wherein the acidic treatment fluid has a pH that does not

15 exceed 4-5 and the acidic treatment fluid is added to a treatment vessel in an amount for replacement that corresponds to an amount that accompanies the chips to a subsequent heating by steam.

20 6. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 5

wherein no continuous withdrawal of acidic treatment fluid takes place from the treatment vessel in excess of a loss of acidic treatment fluid that accompanies the chips.

25 7. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1

wherein the alkali impregnation fluid is constituted by a sulphide-rich liquor.

8. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 7

30 wherein the alkali impregnation fluid is constituted by a mixture of at least one of sulphide-rich white liquor, sulphide-rich black liquor and/or sulphide-rich green liquor, and where the alkali impregnation fluid has a molarity of HS^- that exceeds 0.15 mol/liter.

9. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 8 wherein the alkali impregnation fluid has a molarity of NaOH that does not exceed 0.75 mol/liter.

5 10. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein a formation of a slurry of the chips in the acidic treatment fluid takes place during a period of 1-20 minutes.

10 11. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 10 wherein the acidic treatment fluid in a vessel is subject to an external flow against a heat exchanger ~~for heating the acidic treatment fluid to a temperature that exceeds 20 °C while not exceeding 80 °C.~~

15 12. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the chips are heated with steam in at least one step to a temperature in a range of 80-120 °C.